

U.S. Attorney's Office
Southern District Ohio
Response to Methamphetamine Epidemic

While most cases of meth production are prosecuted at the state level, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Southern Ohio has brought federal charges against larger meth producing organizations as well as organizations that traffic in the more potent imported meth.

Earlier this year, the ringleader of a meth production ring in south central Ohio was sentenced to almost 23 years in prison. He was the last of 25 people convicted in federal court to be sentenced. Dismantling that operation required the cooperation of more than 20 federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and task forces over a two year period.

Also this year, a Cincinnati-area man was sentenced to seven years in federal prison for running a mobile meth lab out of the back of his truck. He drove to customers in Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio – producing meth in the back of his truck as he traveled. He was caught while drinking and driving when he ran into a patrol officer. His truck, which was less than five years old, had more than 175,000 miles on it.

One of the more tragic, yet common, cases involving meth production included three family members who cooked meth in the rented house they lived in near Franklin, Ohio. A two-year old, who was also living there, was exposed to the toxic fumes and by-products of the meth cooking. The adults are serving ten years in federal prison, but the child will have to live with the physical and emotional scars the rest of her life.

The U.S. Attorney reports that increasing amounts of potent “imported” meth are coming into Ohio.

In March of this year, a New Mexico Highway Patrolman stopped a vehicle with Oklahoma plates. The vehicle was registered to a man in Columbus, Ohio. A search of his vehicle found 14 kilograms of cocaine and almost two pounds of 96-100% pure methamphetamine. In a controlled delivery, the drugs arrived at their final destination in Columbus. The three defendants were convicted in federal court and are awaiting sentencing.

In Cincinnati, four people were charged federally when they tried to sell five pounds of meth that they had brought from Phoenix to an undercover Cincinnati police officer. They were convicted and the top two people in the organization are now serving more than 11 years in federal prison.

A federal grand jury indicted 16 people in Reynoldsburg, Zanesville and Middletown, Ohio and two California members of the Dodge City Crips last month as part of a drug distribution network that included meth. This means meth has “gone urban.” Meth is now one of the products that organized California-based gangs ship to small-town Ohio.

In 2001, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Southern Ohio had two meth cases. This year, so far, they've opened 10 cases involving meth coming into Ohio. Federal prosecutors see this as an indication that we will be seeing more of the “high-test” Mexican meth, in addition to the meth cooked locally.